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Free computers available to Casey farmers

LIBERTY - A partnership with the Somerset Community College, the University of Kentucky Agriculture Extension Service and the state is providing farmers in Casey and Russell counties with free computers and 12 hours of training on how to use it.

The state has allotted 36 computers for farmers in the two counties, according to Alesa Johnson of the college Office of Community, Workforce and Economic Development. The program is being funded with Kentucky Agricultural Development funds.

The National Agriculture Statistics Service reports that fewer than 20 percent of Kentucky farmers use a computer for farm business.

The project's objective is to teach farmers how to effectively use computer technology to keep financial records, keep inventories and keep livestock records. They will also learn to do research and marketing on the Internet and to communicate through e-mails.

So far, the college has completed one class of 11 farmers in Russell County. A second class with 13 farmers at the Casey County Agricultural Extension Service office ended Friday.

"It's intended for farmers in counties that have lost tobacco income," Johnson said. "Russell and Casey counties were allotted 36 computers out of a total of 400 for the entire state."

Johnson said that there will be one additional class starting Tuesday at Casey extension office. The class will meet for two weeks from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday and Friday night.

"Most of the slots are filled," Johnson said. "There may be one or two places left."

Anyone in Casey County interested in receiving a free computer and 12 hours of training can call the extension office at (606) 787-7384, or call Chris Pierce in Russell County at (606) 219-0245. There is a \$25 fee for the course, but spouses are included. The web site is: www.somcc.kctcs.edu.

The class is being taught by Somerset College adjunct instructor Angela Cross-Outland. The training includes instruction on how to keep inventories and financial records.

Somerset Community College is a comprehensive two-year institution of higher education. Somerset College has campuses in Somerset and London, centers in Clinton, McCreary and Russell counties. A new center located in Casey County is expected to open in the near future.

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